

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-23 and add claims 24-32 as set forth below.

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Cancelled)
7. (Cancelled)
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10. (Cancelled)
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16. (Cancelled)
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18. (Cancelled)
19. (Cancelled)
20. (Cancelled)
21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)

24. (New) A method for acknowledging the delivery of a mail piece within a mailing system, the method comprising the steps of:

capturing an electronic image of the mail piece;

capturing an image of a recipient's signature when a mail piece is delivered to the recipient;

capturing a response message composed by the recipient when the mail piece is delivered; and

combining the captured electronic image of the mail piece, the captured image of the recipient's signature and the captured response message to form an electronic message response acknowledging receipt of the mail piece.

25. (New) The method of claim 24 comprising the further steps of:

determining an electronic address of an originator of the mail piece;
and

sending the electronic message response to the originator of the mail piece.

26. (New) The method of claim 25 wherein the electronic address of the originator is an e-mail address obtained by scanning the mail piece.

27. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein the steps of capturing the image of the recipient's signature and capturing the response message are performed with an electronic data collection device.

28. (New) The method of claim 24 wherein the steps of capturing the image of the recipient's signature and capturing the response message include a further step of:

scanning a printed form containing the recipient's signature and response message to obtain an electronic image of the image of the recipient's signature and the response message.

29. (New) The method of claim 26 wherein the steps of determining the electronic address of the originator of the mail piece and sending the electronic message response to the originator of the mail piece are performed with the electronic data collection device.

30. (New) The method of claim 26 comprising the further steps of:

digitally signing the electronic message response; and
archiving the signed electronic message response.

31. (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of capturing the response message is optional.

32. (New) The method of claim 24 comprising the further step of:

determining that an originator of the mail piece has requested delivery confirmation.